Press Secretary Signed for Miffed Mrs. Mitchell

New Rash of Headlines Brings Action

WASHINGTON (AP) — Martha Mitchell is allergic to protest marchers, liberal Senators, marijuana and newsmen.

The bright-eyed and sharp-tongued wife of Atty. Gen. John N. Mitchell first bobbed into the headlines after last November's Vietnam Moratorium when she griped in a television interview about "the very liberal Communists."

Later there were reports she had used the White House switchboard to telephone wives of senators on behalf of the Supreme Court nomination of Clement F. Haynsworth Jr.

Friday a press secretary for Mrs. Mitchell went on her husband's personal non-governmental payroll after another spate of headlines about her reported request that an Arkansas newspaper "crucify" Democratic Sen. J. W. Fulbright for voting against another nominee to the high court, G. Harrold Carswell.

Since the original television interview Mrs. Mitchell has refused to be interviewed about anything but fashions, although newsmen are more anxious to hear about the things she says than the things she wears.

Her new press secretary, former Houston Post women's editor Kay Woestendiek, could not be reached Friday.

Mrs. Mitchell, in her late 40s, and attractive, delivers her sometimes caustic remarks in a soft drawl retained from her girlhood in Pine Bluff, Ark., where she was born.

After graduating from the University of Miami she taught school for a year but quit because she didn't like it. Her first marriage lasted nearly 11 years and ended in divorce.

Soon afterward she met and married Mitchell, then a prosperous New York City attorney who also had been married once before.

The couple has a daughter, Martha, 8. Mitchell has a son and a daughter by his first marriage, and Mrs. Mitchell has a son by hers.

After Mitchell managed Richard M. Nixon's successful presidential campaign and was appointed attorney general, Washington gossip columnists found his wife's doings a favorite subject.

After sniffing marijuana smoke in an identification demonstration at the Bureau of Narcotics, she reportedly came down with an unpleasant allergic reaction.

"I looked like I had been burned around my eyes and cheek area," she was quoted as saying.

At another point a columnist said Mrs. Mitchell sternly lectured Republican Sen. Charles H. Percy of Illinois about his voting record.

"It's liberals like you who are selling this nation down the river to the Communists," she was quoted as telling Percy at a dinner party.

In the CBS-TV interview on Nov. 21 she said, "I don't think the average Americans realize how desperate it is when a group of demonstrators, not peaceful demonstraters but the very liberal Communists, move into Washington."

"As my husband has said many times," she continued, "some of the liberals in this country, he'd like to take them and change them for the Russian Communists."

Mitchell said later he would agree with the statement if the term "violence-prone radicals" was substituted for the term "liberals."

COMPLAINS OF VOTE

In the Fulbright incident, the Arkansas Gazette said Mrs. Mitchell telephoned them at 2 a.m. EST Thursday, hours after Carswell's nomination had been rejected 51 to 45, to complain about the Democratic senator's vote.

"It makes me so damn mad I can't stand it," she was quoted as saying. "I want you to crucify Fulbright and that's it."

Fulbright said the remark was "flamboyant" but dismissed it as "just a manner of speaking." He also was filmed chuckling about the report as an amused colleague read it to him.

If Mitchell is upset about his wife's behavior he doesn't show it.

"I love her, that's all I have to say," he said Thursday night at a dinner.

It also seems unlikely that Martha Mitchell has surprised her high school classmates from Pine Bluff. Years ago they wrote under her yearbook picture:

"I love its gentle warble
"I love its gentle flow
"I love to wind my tongue up
"And I love to let it go."